

# W5YI

Nation's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

## REPORT

Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable. May be reproduced providing credit is given to The W5YI Report.

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## ARRL CRITICIZES FCC PERFORMANCE IN AMATEUR ENFORCEMENT AND RFI

*Official Observers "ignored" by FCC; volunteers "demoralized", League charges*

On March 15, the American Radio Relay League delivered to the FCC a stinging critique of the agency's record in amateur enforcement and interference. The ARRL findings can be nothing but embarrassing to the Commission. Whether it will stimulate needed reforms remains to be seen.

Especially in the past three years, the FCC, and its Compliance and Information Bureau (CIB), have been "completely ineffective" in meaningful Amateur Radio enforcement, according to the ARRL.

"The current perception in the Amateur Service is that there is no Commission presence whatsoever, and instances of intentional rule violation are increasing substantially as the direct result of that perception," the ARRL said.

"The League has an Official Observer program in place, with dedicated volunteers, but its work product, once submitted, has been ignored and implicitly rejected by the Commission as a basis for any enforcement action, and the program is essentially non-functional as a result. ...The work of radio amateurs who volunteer thousands of hours of time monitoring these violations, conduct sophisticated direction-finding to identify the rule violators, and prepare transcripts for the CIB offices, has all gone for naught, and the volunteers are understandably and justifiably demoralized," ARRL said.

The League called this a "shameful waste of volunteer resources" that could be fixed using few FCC resources.

"In recent years, the Commission has been viewed as a 'paper tiger' in rule enforcement matters. It has failed to act in even the most egregious rule violation cases in the Amateur Service. ... Many children who are both Amateur Radio licensees and who are served by Amateur Radio, in those areas where malicious interference exists, are subjected to obscenity and indecency, all in a deliberate effort to jam on-going rule compliant amateur communications," according to the ARRL.

"Malicious interference is perpetrated by a very few individuals, but if it goes unaddressed for long, it is a problem that tends to spread and continue. Conversely, if the Commission addresses an instance without delay, the problem tends to disappear and not recur in the same area."

### **FCC said to offer only "excuses"**

The ARRL said it has received assurances from FCC CIB staff at all levels that the most visible, current malicious interference problems would be resolved. Those promises allegedly went unfulfilled. The League said "only excuses have been offered" and that the service provided by the CIB in Amateur



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Service enforcement is the "worst example of the Commission's services to the public."

The League noted that budget factors and cumbersome procedures affect the ability of the FCC to enforce its rules. Under the Communications Act, available actions that can be taken against violators currently include:

- License revocations (which require prior notice and a full administrative hearing, with their administrative and judicial appeals procedures);
- License suspensions (which require prior written notice and an opportunity for a full hearing, during which time the suspension order is not effective);
- Cease and desist orders (which also involve a hearing, in which the burden of proceeding and of proof is on the FCC);
- Monetary forfeitures (fines), which the ARRL called "interminably appealable administratively" and which the FCC has no power itself to collect (and which, as we often point out in *W5YI Report*, are routinely not paid).

Even given these limitations, the ARRL explained that enforcement can be improved in the Amateur Service because:

- "Very little is required of the Commission in order to retain the requisite sense of deterrence nationwide in a very large radio service;
- "Amateurs have been and are willing to do their part in both routine self-policing and evidence gathering in egregious cases, and have performed in this respect admirably;
- "Amateurs have no individual enforcement jurisdiction whatsoever and there is no substitute for Commission action in certain types of compliance cases."

ARRL revealed that local FCC personnel in the field offices have been instructed "not to address any amateur enforcement problem absent specific instructions from Washington to do so." This is true even though hams have good working relationships with most engineers-in-charge at the FCC offices around the country, and the engineers are willing to help, according to the League.

## Authority to immediately suspend licenses needed

ARRL recommended that the FCC obtain the legal authority to "summarily and immediately suspend" amateur licenses upon receipt of information that causes the FCC to believe that a licensee has violated a fundamental Amateur Radio rule or section of the Communications Act.

The FCC would also be able to immediately modify

an amateur operator or station license, so as to preclude operation on the frequency bands, or at the times, during which the observed rule violations occurred.

The ARRL proposed to limit the summary license suspension or modification to no more than six months per incident. After that period, the FCC would have to go through its existing procedures, which afford the licensee what the League called a "full panoply of due process entitlements". In addition to the deterrent benefits and the support it would offer to volunteers, this method would permit an "immediate, swift response to a serious problem," the ARRL said.

"If necessary, the short-term suspension could be followed up with a longer term solution, though it is believed that such would not, in most cases, be necessary."

## FCC refuses to exercise RFI jurisdiction

Besides malicious interference, the ARRL also addressed interference experienced by home electronic equipment. As we have frequently noted in *W5YI Report*, the FCC has legal authority to require better radiofrequency interference (RFI) protection in consumer products - authority it has never used.

(CIB officials told us that this because Amateur Radio is a "hobby service". If it were a business service, they said, then the agency's response to RFI would be quite different.)

The League called "astounding" that after so many years "the Commission continues to focus on the symptom, rather than the cause, of the problem. The problem is in two parts:

- "1) the susceptibility of the consumer device to normally encountered levels of RF energy; and
- "2) the perception and expectation of the consumer of an electronic device that the product that they have purchased will not be interference susceptible.

"The Commission has, since 1982, had authority to address, by a profusion of options, the root cause of interference complaints. It has consistently refused to exercise that jurisdiction.

"The League suggests that the Commission would save itself, its licensees, and innocent consumers of RF-susceptible consumer electronic devices a tremendous amount of difficulty by simply exercising its heretofore latent jurisdiction by requiring notices on the products and requiring manufacturers to provide interference resolution information and a contact representative for RFI resolution, just as computer manufacturers do in case of purchaser difficulty.

The FCC is experimenting with a "privatized" interference resolution program (see *W5YI Report*, Aug. 1, 1995). ARRL is not optimistic about this program. "The fundamental flaw in this privatization proposal of CIB," the League said, "is that the victim of interference to home



electronic equipment is expected to pay for the private interference resolution service.

"All the consumer did was purchase an RF-susceptible device. A consumer in such a position, having to pay to resolve such a problem, may well be expected to be compensated by the operator of the transmitter that is the catalyst of the interference. This will, therefore, escalate the dispute between the consumer and the transmitter operator."

The ARRL recommended that the FCC use voluntary, non-compensated groups of amateurs to assist in interference cases, with statutory protection from civil liability. It pointed out that the Coast Guard Auxiliary has similar protection.

## International amateur radio license

The ARRL also recommended that the FCC participate with other nations in issuing International Amateur Radio Permits (IARP): "For more than four years, the ARRL has been working with the FCC and the Department of State to add the U.S. as a participant... Frankly, we are very disappointed at the slow pace of progress," the ARRL said, urging the FCC to conclude the matter as soon as possible.

## MORE ON THE QUESTION POOL DISPUTE

In our last issue, we told about a dispute involving the VEC's Question Pool Committee. The QPC is responsible for making the final question selections for each written examination element. At last year's Annual VEC Conference, the VECs voted to incorporate and all VEC functions - including the Question Pool Committee (QPC) - was transferred to the NCVEC, Inc.

The ARRL took the position that the ARRL/VEC should not participate in the corporation. At that point, the NCVEC, Inc. replaced ARRL's Bart Jahnke/KB9NM with another QPC member, Walter "Scotty" Neustadter N4PYD of Huntsville, AL. On January 18, ARRL's Dave Sumner wrote that if Bart Jahnke was not returned to the QPC, that the ARRL would invite all VECs to participate in a question pool maintenance process that would be open to all VECs, as required by the rules and would ask the FCC to terminate its agreement with any VECs who participated in the decision to exclude the ARRL/VEC from participation in the QPC.

Don Tunstill, WB4HOK, NCVEC, Inc. president said On February 14th that the ARRL/VEC manager could be returned to the QPC if the League would agree that the ARRL/VEC could participate with the NCVEC's QPC.

On February 23, the League released ARRL Bulletin No. 13 stating that the mechanism for maintaining the Question Pools had "broken down and no longer operates as FCC rules require." Section §97.523 of the Part 97 rules requires that "All VECs must cooperate in maintaining one question pool for each written element."

The ARRL formally asked the FCC to advise Don Tunstill that the NCVEC question pool committee operating exclusively under the NCVEC, Inc. is no longer the mechanism through which question pools for Amateur Radio Service examinations are maintained and to issue a public notice to that effect. The League has now embarked on creating a replacement Question Pool Committee.

In our last Report, we mentioned that no response to the NCVEC letter of February 14, 1996 had been received from the League. On March 20 we were advised that ARRL President Rod Stafford did indeed answer the Don Tunstill letter on February 24th. Don, however, says he never received it. Here is a copy of that letter which was made available to us by ARRL's Dave Sumner, K1ZZ.

Mr. Dalton Tunstill  
NCVEC, Inc.  
1215 Dale Drive SE  
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

February 24, 1996

Dear Mr. Tunstill:

I was a bit surprised to receive your letter of February 14. Dave Sumner had shared with me your e-mail message to him dated February 7, in which you told him, "Yes, I received you [sic] letter. We are in the process of answering you [sic] letter. It will probably be finished and mailed this week-end." From that, it would have seemed reasonable to expect that your response would be addressed to Dave, and that it would be sent somewhat sooner than it was.

Let me be perfectly clear on this point: With regard to the problem at hand, Dave has stated the position of the ARRL Board of Directors in this matter. The only concern about his handling of this matter that I have heard from Board members is that if anything, he has been entirely too patient with you and the NCVEC. We are, after all, talking about a matter that should have been settled last September.

There is no need for the ARRL to supply the written statement that you have requested. The committee in question is not, and cannot be, a committee of the NCVEC, Inc. There is no agreement between the FCC and the NCVEC, Inc. The agreements are between the FCC and the individual organizations that serve as VECs. The FCC rules bind all VECs to cooperate in maintaining a question pool for each written examination element. A few VECs, even a majority of VECs, cannot unilaterally create a corporation as a mechanism for maintaining the pools and then exclude other VECs who do not choose to participate in that corporation. We know we are not alone in choosing to not participate in the corporation, but even if we were, it would make no difference.

It appears that the only course left to us is the one Dave outlined in his letter of January 18. He has been authorized to proceed in the manner set forth in that letter.

Incidentally, you may have noticed that that letter was postmarked in Savannah. It was mailed from the site of our Board Meeting, after being personally reviewed and approved by me and after being shared with all of the members of the Board.

I suggest the NCVEC re-evaluate its position and the approach taken in this matter.

Yours truly, Rod Stafford KB6ZV  
President of the American Radio Relay League, Inc.



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## STS-76 SHUTTLE ASTRONAUTS TO SPEAK WITH STUDENTS VIA AMATEUR RADIO

Ham radio operators from around the world are pointing their antennas at the sky. Many of them hope to make radio contact with the astronauts aboard the Space Shuttle Atlantis and the STS-76 mission. Some of these amateurs have volunteered to assist student groups that have prepared questions to ask the astronauts via the ham radio airwaves. The project is called the Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment, or SAREX.

The astronauts will use a radio aboard the shuttle, on frequencies used by ham radio operators, to talk directly with large groups of students. They'll demonstrate to young people, teachers, parents and communities how Amateur Radio energizes students about science, technology, and learning.

The primary mission of STS-76 is to rendezvous with the Russian Mir space station. To operate Amateur Radio from the space shuttle, one or more of the astronauts needs to have an Amateur Radio license. Shuttle commander Kevin Chilton (who just received his amateur call sign) is KC5TEU; shuttle pilot Richard A. Searfoss is KC5CKM. And two of the four Mission Specialists are ham licensed: Ronald M. Sega is KC5ETH and Linda M. Godwin is N5RAX. Last December Linda Godwin married fellow astronaut Steve Nagel N5RAW, making the pair the first married astronaut ham couple.

Only Mission Specialists Shannon Lucid (a lady astronaut) and Rich Clifford do not have ham tickets. Shannon wanted to obtain her amateur license but did not have the opportunity to do so due to the heavy workload preparing for the mission which included lengthy training in Star City, Russia. She should, however, be able to use the radio aboard Mir, possibly using the station call R0MIR as Norm Thagard did during his three month stay.

During the STS-76 mission, the Space Shuttle Atlantis makes its third of seven trips to the Russian Space Station Mir. These are preliminary missions prior to building the International Space Station. You can get additional STS-76 information from NASA Websites located at: <http://spacelink.msfc.nasa.gov> and <http://shuttle.nasa.gov>

After docking with Mir, the shuttle will return to Earth, leaving Shannon Lucid for a 5 month stay aboard the Russian complex. The shuttle will also carry a SPACE-HAB laboratory (providing the astronauts with a working environment to conduct microgravity research) and additional goods with which to re-supply Mir.

The launch was initially scheduled for March 21 at 0834 UTC (3:34 a.m. EST) from the Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Florida but was postponed 24 hours due to high winds. Landing of the 9 day mission is now scheduled for March 31, 1995 at 1707 UTC (12:07 a.m. EST) at KSC.

The objective of SAREX is to involve the largest possible numbers of people, particularly students, in tech-

nology and the U.S. space program with the help of Amateur Radio. During SAREX missions, the astronauts typically make scheduled radio contacts with schools, random radio contacts with the Amateur Radio community and personal radio contacts with their families.

A handful of schools are selected from around the world to make contact with the shuttle during most SAREX missions. These contacts are prearranged, giving the schools a greater chance at making a successful contact. Two or more students at each of the selected schools ask questions of the astronauts during the contact.

The following schools have been selected by the SAREX Working Group for a scheduled radio contact with the astronauts during the STS-76 mission:

- Artesia Public Schools, Artesia, NM
- Troy Middle School, Troy, TX
- S. J. Davis Middle School, San Antonio, TX
- Bethlehem Central Senior High School, Delmar, NY
- University of Colorado, (College of Engineering and Applied Science), Colorado Springs, CO

During most SAREX missions, many of the crew members will make random contacts with earth-bound hams. They make these contacts during their breaks, before and after meal time, and during their pre-sleep time. In fact, over the past years the astronauts have contacted thousands of amateurs around the world.

Since this flight is a docking mission, the SAREX hardware is being flown in configuration M which uses the shuttle/Mir Motorola 2-meter VHF radio and window mounted antenna for FM voice radio contacts.

The crew will use separate receive and transmit frequencies for SAREX contacts. PLEASE do not transmit on the shuttle's DOWNLINK frequency. The DOWNLINK is your receiving frequency. The UPLINK is your transmitting frequency.

- FM Voice Downlink: 145.84 MHZ
- FM Voice Uplink: 144.45, 144.47 MHZ

The crew will not favor either uplink frequency, so your ability to communicate with SAREX will be the "luck of the draw." Transmit only when the shuttle is within range of your station, and when the shuttle's station is on-the-air. Any of the astronaut's station call signs may be used.

During final approaches to the Mir Space Station, the two meter radio used by the crew for SAREX activities is used on 145.55 MHZ to coordinate the shuttle/Mir docking maneuvers and for providing status reports.

ARRL's (Newington, CT) Amateur Radio station (W1AW) transmits SAREX news bulletins (at 9:45 p.m. and 12:45 a.m. EST) on HF at 1.855, 3.99, 7.29, 14.29, 18.16, 21.39 and 28.59 MHZ. W1AW bulletins are also forwarded on packet. The Goddard Amateur Radio Club (Greenbelt, MD) re-transmits live, shuttle air-to-ground audio from their club station, WA3NAN on 3.86, 7.185, 14.295, 21.395, and 28.65 MHZ.



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## NEWS FROM THE INTERNET

■ **Small internet appliances are coming out of the woodwork!** Most are aimed at consumers, but giant corporations are now interested in them to distribute information ...even price-off coupons. TransPhone (Ottawa, Canada) has a \$500 Internet Terminal with a built-in credit card swiper.

Be on the lookout for "graphical terminals" lashed to the Internet at banks, gas stations, supermarkets ...everywhere. (ATMs can't offer colorful graphics and interactivity.) Apple, Sun, Oracle, IBM, Phillips, Sega and others all are jumping on the bandwagon. BellSouth just put its metro-Atlanta Yellow Pages on the Web.

Hopefully, low cost Internet terminals and appliances will catch on since Dataquest (a respected San Jose, CA research firm) says that the explosive market for standard, full feature PCs will end next year with no growth. And it sees a 2% drop in shipments in 1998. Reason: The "affluent U.S. home market" will reach saturation. (Only one person in ten earning less than \$30,000 owns a PC.)

■ **Export of encryption technology is tightly controlled by the U.S. government who don't want terrorists and criminals sending secret transmissions.** The problem is that weak encryption is preventing wider business use of the electronic marketplace. It is even illegal to discuss encryption schemes on the Internet. Now comes word that U.S. encryption policy is being challenged in a California federal court on first amendment "free speech" grounds. The betting is that it is unconstitutional for the U.S. to routinely prevent its citizens from exchanging confidential messages.

■ In an effort to narrow Netscape's lead in Web Browsers, **Microsoft is now letting Windows-95 users download its Version 2.0 Internet Explorer web browser FREE.** Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/windows> and download MSIE20.EXE.

A word of caution, however! So far, v.2.0 only works with Windows-95. Microsoft will shortly release versions for Windows 3.1, Windows NT and the Macintosh. A upcoming new feature will incorporate filtering which will permit parents to block websites that have been rated by their owners for sexual content,

nudity, profanity and violence.

■ **Confidential Stuff!** Neither will say what they are up to, but **Microsoft and Hallmark Cards have formed a five year developmental alliance to "...create personal expression products."** Our guess is that you can shortly expect PC-created, Internet-delivered, laser-printed greeting cards.

In another partnership, **Microsoft and satellite broadcaster, DirecTV are joining forces to introduce "datacasting" to the public.** Included will be broadcast television, Internet access and long distance video conferencing over the Internet to personal computers.

Still another alliance has **Intel and Microsoft combining to facilitate low cost long distance phone calls** using PCs and the Internet.

We understand that MCI, Sprint, the Baby Bells and Motorola have a special deal going that will bring competitively priced **high speed ISDN links** to Windows 95 users. ISDN delivers information five times (up to 128K bps) faster than standard telephone lines. Microsoft also has free software to add new ISDN capabilities to Windows 95

**Microsoft is also working on browser-based home banking and bill paying** that will eliminate the need to use any additional financial management software such as Intuit's Quicken or Microsoft's own Money program. The new protocol is called Open Financial Connectivity (or OFC).

These features are among those on the drawing board for a planned update of the Windows 95 operating system!

■ **"NetDay-96" was March 9 in California!** On that day, a group of nearly 14,000 volunteers (headed up Sun Microsystems, Hewlett-Packard and Pacific Tel.) put just about every one of California's 13,000 elementary and secondary school on the Internet's World Wide Web. Volunteers were located by posting a sign-up sheet to the Internet.

■ **The Government of Singapore joins mainland China in censoring portions of the Internet.** Both content and access providers are being held responsible for keeping pornographic and objectionable material out of the country. The Singapore Broadcasting Authority, the official government censor, and the three approved access providers now ban information that "...undermines public morals, political stability or religious harmony."

## THE ON-LINE GOLD MINE

■ The jockeying continues in the internet and on-line world. The final contenders have been identified. They are Netscape, America On-Line, Microsoft and CompuServe. Out of the picture seems to be Netcom and Prodigy. And Apple's "eWorld" on-line service has now folded completely. Apple will now push AOL. Unknown quantity: the nation's telephone (especially MCI and AT&T) and cable TV (TCI) companies which are just getting going.

It is still too early to determine who will be among the last standing. Our bet is on Microsoft. No one else has the resources of a Bill Gates & Company. He can plunk down a billion dollars or more in pocket change for anything (or any company) he wants. While he initially misread the market (it is the Internet's World Wide Web), he has now seen the light and is gaining ground. Microsoft has now mounted marketing attacks in all three Internet areas: access, content and browsers.

■ **Long distance telephone companies are beginning to greatly impact the Internet access market!** National internet access provider, Netcom (with 300,000 subscribers) sells Net access for \$19.95 a month for 40 hours peak usage with unlimited off peak hours. Three months ago Netcom shares were selling for nearly \$70 a share. They have now nose-dived to around \$20. (And UUNet, PSINet and Spyglass have all dropped more than 60%.)

Reason: The AT&T WorldNet Internet service lowered the access price to FREE for 5 hours/month and \$19.95 for unlimited access for its 80 million long distance customers. They immediately received over 212,000 orders! (Non-AT&T customers will pay \$24.95 month.)

AT&T did not say that the March 14th kick-out date did not include all of its customers ...such as those with Windows-95 or Macintosh operating systems. Getting software going for those operating systems will take longer.

To retain its long distance customers, MCI now has matched the AT&T pricing. Interestingly, MCI says that (unlike AT&T), it has browser software immediately available for all of its customers. What it does not say is that it is an older



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version of Netscape. It too is waiting for Microsoft (with whom it has formed a joint venture) to come up with browser versions for all PC operating systems.

Sprint, the No. 3 long distance carrier, plans to enter the Internet access business this summer. AT&T says it will install an AOL icon that will allow its WorldNet subscribers to access America Online. It is our guess is that all three long distance companies will eventually act as a conduit to the online universe.

■ **Netscape and Microsoft both courted America On-line and CompuServe ...the top two consumer online services.** Together they have nearly ten million subscribers. Both offered their Internet browser software as the "carrot." And both services decided to use them both!

Instead of the springboard to future business being the "operating system" (which Microsoft controls) - the battle is now being staged with Web browser platforms. Essentially, it's the Netscape Navigator against the (Microsoft) Explorer.

Microsoft has already convinced MCI (which dropped its own online "IGuide" entry efforts and threw in with the Microsoft Network) to use the Explorer.

AT&T went with Netscape. Here is the browser scorecard ...at least right now!

Service:	Web Browser Used:
America Online	Microsoft & Netscape
CompuServe	Microsoft & Netscape
Prodigy	Netscape
AT&T Worldwide	Netscape
InternetMCI	Eventually Microsoft
Netcom	Microsoft & Netscape
PSINet (Pipeline)	Netscape

■ **So the orgy continues. "Forming strategic alliances" is now the name of the game.** The strategy now is now to exchange customers with competition. Some 15 million (or 92%) of all homes and businesses on the Web now use Netscape. Microsoft: 1.3 million ...but growing FAST!

One of the reasons is that Microsoft can offer something that no other firm can! That is a prized desktop access icon in their Windows-95 operating system that carries a user to a competitor's on-line service.

Seeing the handwriting on the wall, Microsoft no longer pushes only its own Microsoft Network in Windows-95. For one thing, MSN only has 850,000 subscribers, while AOL: more than five million.

While their software monopoly is

basically gone, the fact remains that Microsoft does have 100 million customers ...which is everyone that owns a PC! America Online (and everyone else) up until recently were bitter enemies, now are courting. In short, everyone is getting into bed with everyone else.

There is still a lot of room for growth and the big will get even bigger! According to a recent research study, only 8% of all households are hooked to the World Wide Web - the fastest growing segment of the Internet. (And only 32% of U.S. homes even own a personal computer.)

■ **Netscape shares (which zoomed from \$28 to \$150 in its first quarter and split) has now dropped 50% in the last 3 months ...fueled by Netscape management cashing in their stock!**

Netscape VP of Technology, Marc Andreessen (still only 24 years old) sold 10% of his holdings for more than \$5 million last month. As a teenager Marc developed the original Mosaic browser (which forms the basis for all browsers - including the Navigator, Explorer and various other propriety browsers) at the University of Illinois while being paid \$6.50 per hour.

■ **And more young cyber-millionaires are on the way!** According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "Yahoo" search engine founders David Filo (age 29) and Jerry Yang (27) stand to be worth between \$50 and \$60 million after a public stock offering. They started the popular Internet search and directory service while students at Stanford University. "Yahoo," which is free to Internet users, makes money by selling advertising space.

There are now some 250 Internet search engines ...including one that links to all of them from one address! Bookmark: <http://www.search.com> If you want access to all possible information searching devices!

■ **New Online Concepts! America Online has launched two digital "Cyber-Cities" (Washington and London)** which are community meeting places. They focus on local information ...such as jobs, restaurants, shopping and entertainment.

Tele-Communications, Inc., the nation's largest cable operator with 16 million subscribers is very interested in the concept for its planned entry into the on-line business via high speed cable modems. TCI will shortly begin alpha-testing its "@Home" service in Fremont and

Sunnyvale, CA.

TCI also owns 20% of the Microsoft Network which would seem to preclude them entering into an alliance with AOL but who knows. Enemies are fast becoming friends.

■ **CompuServe (which has a high percentage of business users) has unveiled a new "WOW Online Service"** directed at "non-tekkie" families and (especially) kids. The screens look different depending on whether you are an adult or a youngster. The service has two rows of buttons: "action" (things you can do) icons at the top and "places" (places you can go) at the bottom.

A disadvantage is that WOW runs ONLY on PCs that have CD-ROM drives, 8 megs (16 preferred) of RAM and Windows-95. It uses the Microsoft Explorer browser. Parental supervisory features include selectable Internet lock-out and E-mail preview. Price is a very competitive \$17.95/month for unlimited access after a 30 day "no charge" trial. The idea is to let the kids romp where they want without worrying about content or cost. Free CD-ROM software is available by telephoning toll free: 1-800-9GETWOW

### BROADCASTING & CABLE

■ **A federal judge in Delaware has blocked implementation of a Section 505 provision of the 1996 Telecommunications Act** that limited "adult channels" to late-night hours if such programming is not fully scrambled in the homes of non-subscribers.

Failure to scramble would have confined adult channels (but not similar programming on regular cable channels) to the so-called "safe harbor" hours of 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. The Playboy Channel and the Spice Network claimed that the required scrambling was unfair, costly and a violation of its First Amendment Rights.

■ **In a separate development, a working group has been formed to address TV show ratings.** Jack Valenti (president of the Motion Picture Association of America) heads up the group. A show's rating will send a censoring signal to a viewer programmable "V-chip." The industry is already worried about how such kid's TV shows as the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* (which has a violence and inappropriate behavior



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component) ...even the classic Road Runner cartoons will rate.

■ **Television broadcasters are lining up against presidential hopeful, Bob Dole** (R-Kan.) due to his position that the digital airwaves should be auctioned rather than given away. Dole says the spectrum will bring up to \$70 billion to the U.S. treasury. Opponents (many of them congressmen) believe the transition to digital TV should be free ...with the old analog channel being sold once the conversion from to digital is complete.

■ **Radio Shack has entered into an agreement to sell the PrimeStar DBS (Direct Broadcast Satellite) service** in its 7,000 stores. Due to its lower power, PrimeStar DBS needs a larger 36" dish. Market leader, DirecTV (with 1.3 million subscribers) is also sold by Radio Shack. It uses a dish half that size. PrimeStar claims 1.1 million subscribers - mostly in rural areas where cable TV is not available.

PrimeStar - which is primarily owned by cable TV companies - is negotiating to go high power and is "creatively" pursuing Canadian and Mexican orbital positions. It also is considering an alliance with MCI/News Corp. which recently paid \$700 million for the last available total U.S. coverage slot.

Unlike its DBS competition, PrimeStar does not have a \$500-\$800 equipment charge. Instead, viewers pay a higher (\$35 to \$60 monthly) programming charge.

And two more DBS services have begun operation. EchoStar and AlphaStar both launched in March. That makes five: DirecTV, USSB, PrimeStar, EchoStar and AlphaStar.

■ **Is satellite telephone service around the corner?** AT&T has completed filing in all fifty states seeking permission to offer local telephone service. They hope to enter the \$90 billion local telephone market this summer. AT&T is also working on partnerships with cable and DBS companies to provide phone service over cable wires and direct broadcast satellites.

## AMATEUR RADIO

■ **We received a note from Lynn Raburn, KE4DA (also 5Z4DU and 5X1HR)** who is stationed in Kenya (East Africa) asking us to publicize the fact that

the Radio Society of Kenya has just been informed by the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi that the Kenyan Government has refused their request for a reciprocal agreement between the United States and Kenya.

"This is in spite of the fact that Kenya has such agreements with at least seven other countries. Kenya has refused to license U.S. hams for six years while it considered the agreement and now the U.S. hams who had been hoping for a 5Z4 call sign will not receive one. American members of the Radio Society of Kenya would appreciate help from fellow Amateurs. Please write a letter or send a FAX of extreme protest to: Benjamin Kipkorir, Kenyan Ambassador to Kenya, 2249 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20008. Tel. 202-387-6101, FAX 202-462-3829. It would also be of great help if you would write your congressman and ask him why the United States sends millions of dollars of aid to a country that refuses normal diplomatic relations with the U.S."

"If you would like more information, you may write the Radio Society of Kenya at: P.O. Box 45681, Nairobi, Kenya."

■ **Did you see the copyrighted story in last week's New York Times concerning ham radio?** It was written by an Edward Rothstein who is not shown in the FCC's database as a licensed amateur. The article's basic premise is that:

**"Reports of the computer-assisted death of ham radio may be greatly exaggerated."**

The well-written feature length article appears in the *Technology Connections* section of the March 18th financial section. Rothstein correctly points out that ham operators are increasingly communicating via the Internet's World Wide Web, "No code. No radio. No schematics. [and] No licenses.

"...hams on the Net are arguing over what the new technology has done to their world." Some amateurs welcome it as an "evolutionary force" while others clearly do not. "What use is Morse code and what purpose do radio frequencies serve when E-mail and chat rooms now attract even ham-radio operators?"

For one thing, Rothstein says, ham operators are "...linking their PCS to their radios to transmit digital [packet radio] data without the cost of telephone lines or Internet providers."

"But the deepest appeal of ham radio may be immune to the Internet

challenge. Of what use is a PC and the Internet when phone lines are down or war breaks out or a storm knocks out power? ...The Internet is being used by ham-radio operators not as a substitute for ham radio, but as a method of talking about it."

Rothstein adds "In 1991, in an effort to increase interest in ham radio, there was an easing of licensing requirements: it is now possible to get a beginning license without any knowledge of Morse code." He quotes ARRL VP Steve Mendelsohn, WA2DHF as saying he "...believes that by 1999, the code may be eliminated as a requirement even for the most advanced level."

■ While amateur radio is indeed here to stay, the fact remains that **the Web is indeed a very simple, quick, predictable and inexpensive way to communicate with ham operators across the globe** - something that an HF radio certainly is not.

Within the last couple of days I have exchanged greetings with Fernando Sia, BV1AL who runs a website in Taiwan in both English and Mandarin and HARTS, the Hong Kong Amateur Radio Transmitting Society. International amateur radio websites are plentiful and very easy to find with a search engine. (Just type BV1AL into Yahoo.)

Fernando works in Taipei for the Taiwan government's National Bureau of Standards. I asked him about Morse code in Taiwan and he told me that you have to pass a 13 words-per-minute code test in Taiwan to get a ham license which he said few people are willing to do.

The last examinations were held in December and there are only 1,700 licensed amateurs in Taiwan. Less than half work HF. He would "...like to see a beginners no code license in Taiwan like they have in Japan ...with 5 wpm for all other classes."

BV1AL also said that there are about 200,000 illegal VHF/UHF operators "beyond your imagination" in Taiwan who "...buy an easily available domestic or Japanese transceiver and put it on the air, just like people buy a TV set and tune to stations." He said that "...hotels, restaurants, cab drivers, truckers, touring bus drivers and construction workers all illegally use 2-meters from 140 MHz to 155 MHz as they like."

His website also has some very uncomplimentary things to say about the People's Republic of China and their recent war games off the Taiwanese



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coast. Interestingly, Fernando tells how the Chinese Taipei Amateur Radio League (their legal English registered name) must be called the Chonghua Amateur Radio League since they are not permitted to internally refer to China. Chonghua means Chinese in Mandarin.

In Hong Kong, HARTS (the Hong Kong Amateur Radio Transmitting Society) is fighting the establishment of a 27 MHz CB band.

■ **According to a March 14th release, the FCC has denied the Applications for Review of monetary forfeitures imposed against Vernon A. Paroli, KA5OWW (Extra Class of New Orleans, LA) and John B. Genovese, WB5LOC (Advanced Class, Slidell, LA.)** Paroli was fined \$700 and Genovese \$500 for causing intentional interference to other amateur stations. They must pay the fines within 30 days.

■ **The Lambda Amateur Radio Club (LARC), a public-service oriented ham radio club for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered hams have raised \$1,050** to aid Anguilla hams in their recovery efforts after last year's devastating hurricane season. The money will be used to replace/repair radio equipment and to purchase supplies. After a stormy beginning when the ARRL refused their advertising, LARC is now a full-fledged ARRL-affiliated club.

■ **The Feb. 1996 issue of *Morsum Magnificat*, The Morse Magazine** published in Great Britain reports that the UK's Radiocommunications Agency (the RA is Great Britain's FCC) has asked the RSGB (Radio Society of Great Britain) "...as the national representative for radio amateurs in the UK to consider formally the proposal to delete Radio Regulation 2735, which was referred from last year's World Radio Conference (WRC-95) to WRC-99, and to give their views on it." RR-2735 is the international regulation that requires Morse code proficiency when amateur radio operations take place below 30 MHz.

■ The publication also reports that the IARU has established an ad hoc committee called **"The Future of the Amateur Service Committee (FASC.)"** consisting of: Chairman Michael Owen VK3KI, Larry Price W4RA, David Sumner K1ZZ, John Gazley G3HCT, Tom Atkins VE3CDM, Terry Carrell ZL3QL and Dick Baldwin W1RR. The IARU is the *International Amateur Radio Union* which is

made up of the various national amateur radio societies throughout the world.

### **"The Committee is asked to:**

a.) Examine the international regulations governing the Amateur Service and Amateur-Satellite Service (other than frequency allocations) with a view to formulating the changes, if any, that are desirable to properly reflect the objects, needs, obligations, and privileges of these services for the next century, so that the services remain viable and valuable, meaningful and relevant to both the community and to those licensed in the services, having regard to:

- the definition of the services,
- the nature and content of transmissions of stations licensed in the services,
- the provision of emergency communications,
- the means to facilitate the international recognition of amateur licenses,
- the technical and operational qualifications for licensees in the amateur services,
- and any other matters considered by the Committee to be relevant,

b.) Undertake its task:

- encouraging full discussion of these matters by preparing discussion papers providing background information, identifying issues and proposing possible solutions,
- inviting comments from individuals, groups, member-societies and regional organizations,
- participating as appropriate in international and other meetings, and taking into account the comments it receives,
- preparing reports, recommendations and proposals for consideration by the Administrative Council, member societies, and regional organizations and ultimately preparing such material as is necessary to ensure that administrations accept proposals adopted by the Administrative Council, all of the foregoing being an ongoing task bearing in mind the regional conferences and the likely agenda for WRC-99."

All member societies have been asked to suggest how the rules might be modified or improved to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

■ **The ARRL has also formed an ad hoc WRC-99 Committee.** Its chairman is Tod Olson K0TO, the ARRL Dakota Division Director. The other members of the committee include: Glen Whitehouse K1GW (of Cushcraft), Tuck Miller KC6ZEC (a technician class licensee from the San Diego area), Ken Kopp K0PP (a

former SM from Montana and a member of the League's No-Code Committee of a few years ago), Steve Mendelsohn WA2DHF (ARRL First VP), Fried Heyn WA6WZO (ARRL Southwestern Division Director), Lew Gordon K4VX (ARRL Midwest Division Director), Greg Milnes W7AGQ (ARRL Northwestern Division Vice Director) and Dave Sumner K1ZZ, (ARRL Executive VP.) ARRL President Rod Stafford, KB6ZV is an ex officio member of the committee.

### WASHINGTON WHISPERS

■ **The FCC is cutting corners in its administrative policies** in the interest of getting the 1996 Telecommunications Act implemented quickly. Among new procedures are shorter comment and reply periods and a general refusal to grant extensions. The Commissioners are also considering asking for shorter comments and that similar views be combined into a single filing.

■ **Taking a tip from ham radio, the Clinton administration intends to sell "vanity" telephone numbers to the public!** President Clinton's new budget contains a plan to raise some \$700 million over three years by auctioning off the new "888" toll free telephone numbers. The proposal requires Congressional approval. But so did the sale of amateur station call signs ...which was forthcoming as part of the 1993 deficit reduction bill. Companies that have corresponding "vanity" telephone numbers (such as 1-800-FLOWERS) are furious! They believe that they should be able to get first shot at these "888" numbers without cost.

■ **Web sarcasm aimed at the Whitehouse!** <http://www.whitehouse.net> is NOT the official U.S. government website for President Clinton and the Whitehouse. That is a spoof of the official government website which is actually located at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov>. Two Annandale, Virginia men, Bill Harris and Chris Mincer created the phony site that even includes a plug for the book by Gennifer Flowers, the woman who says she had an affair with Bill Clinton. We also noted that the "President" and "First Lady" captions below Bill and Hillary Clinton photographs were reversed.

The administration is not amused ...especially since the website address is so similar.



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## 1996 DAYTON AWARD WINNERS - AMSAT PRESIDENT NAMED "HAM OF THE YEAR"

### *Radio Amateur of the Year*

William A. (Bill) Tynan, W3XO, has been named HamVention 1996 Amateur of the Year by the Dayton Amateur Radio Association. Bill has championed the cause of VHF/UHF enthusiasts, worldwide. He had been contributing editor for QST Magazine's "World above 50 MHZ" column for eighteen years, providing a medium to nurture new communication techniques, encourage DX performance and improve contesting rules on the VHF/UHF bands. He pioneered the establishment of the Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation (AMSAT). From the founding days of the first OSCAR-6 launch to his present post as President of AMSAT-NA, Bill has sacrificed much of his personal time, talent and resources to the promotion and development of the amateur satellite program. His vision continues with the advent of the Phase 3-D project, scheduled for launch in December, ushering in an entirely new dimension of amateur radio operation.

### *Special Achievement Award*

John Kraus, W8JK, has contributed vastly to many advancements in antenna design by exploiting the electromagnetic spectrum. These improvements are still enjoyed today by all amateur radio operators. He invented several new antennas over the years including the W8JK- beam antenna, the helical antenna and most recognizable the "Big Ear" antenna. With the building of the "Big Ear" antenna came the "Wow" signal... an extraterrestrial signal that hasn't been able to be explained away. John became a Professor at Ohio State. During his tenure, he authored many articles and textbooks. He wrote an interesting story of the early years entitled "Big Ear". Professor Kraus has often given presentations at local amateur radio clubs in the Columbus, OH area.

### *Technical Excellence Award*

William (Bill) I. Orr, W6SAI, has inspired new and veteran amateurs with his consistent encouragement and technical expertise. Amateur radio has benefited from Bill's publications, The Radio Handbook, the Beam Antenna Handbook, The Quad Antenna Handbook, The UHF-VHF Manual, and many others, becoming "shack" standards. Bill provided technical assistance beyond his duties as an engineer at EIMAC, personally answering technical questions and supplying schematic ideas to amateur radio builders. It was his open concern that went the extra mile to further the kinship of ham radio. He wrote monthly articles for "Radio Fundamentals" in CQ magazine until last year when he announced his retirement. Hundreds of letters from friends prompted him to come out of retirement and he still continues writing.

## FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY ISSUED SPECIAL AMATEUR RADIO CALL SIGNS

In response to an official request from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Federal Communications Commission has issued eighteen call signs to be used by FEMA during emergencies. According to FEMA Frequency Manager, Paul Reid, N4EKW (General Class of Stephenson, VA), these call signs will only be used by FEMA Telecommunications Operations personnel to communicate directly with ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service), RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) and other amateur radio operators and/or networks during emergencies and disasters.

The need for these call signs came to light last year when FEMA found it necessary to ask for amateur communications network support during a serious hurricane.

The Part 97 Rules (Section §97.401) makes provision for amateur stations communicating with non-amateur stations when normal communications are damaged or disrupted during a disaster. Furthermore, Section §97.407(c)(3) allows certain U.S. Government stations to communicate with RACES stations.

Amateur radio operators, however, most often fail to recognize the FEMA government call signs on the ham bands. During the recent weather emergency, some amateur radio stations even deliberately jammed the FEMA station believing that it was an unauthorized pirate station.

The FCC has now allocated the following amateur call signs to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (P.O. Box 129, Berryville, VA 22611.)

KF1EMA - Region I, Maynard, MA  
KF2EMA - Region II, New York, NY  
KF3EMA - Region III, Philadelphia, PA  
KF4EMA - Region IV, Thomasville, GA  
KF5EMA - Region V, Chicago, IL  
KF6EMA - Region VI, Denton, TX  
KF7EMA - Region VII, Kansas City, MO  
KF8EMA - Region VIII, Denver, CO  
KF9EMA - Region IX, San Francisco, CA  
KF0EMA - Region X, Bothell, WA  
NF1EMA - FEMA HQ, Mt. Weather, Berryville, VA  
NF2EMA - Federal Support Center, Olney, MD  
WF1EMA - Maynard MERS Detachment  
WF3EMA - MATTS  
WF4EMA - Thomasville MERS Detachment  
WF6EMA - Denton MERS Detachment  
WF8EMA - Denver MERS Detachment  
WF0EMA - Bothell MERS Detachment

One of these call signs (KF4EMA) was accidentally assigned to a Cecil G. Perry of Black Mountain, NC. He has now been reissued another call sign, KF4HTN.



## NATIONAL FREQUENCY COORDINATOR'S COUNCIL SUGGESTED BY COMMITTEE

It is beginning to look like the amateur repeater community will be represented by the National Frequency Coordinator's Council. At least that is the proposal being circulated by an appointed blue ribbon panel of frequency coordinating managers.

A National Frequency Coordinator's meeting held last fall in St. Charles, Missouri determined that it would be in everyone's best interest to have a single point of contact (SPOC) between the amateur repeater community and the Federal Communications Commission. As it is right now, the sector is very fragmented.

At the October 7th meeting, the repeater coordinators saw no means of financial support for the SPOC other than the League and voted that the American Radio Relay League should become the SPOC.

A committee headed up by T-MARC's Owen Wormser, K6LEW was appointed to draft a "white paper report" that would advance the concept. The other members of the Drafting Committee included well-known frequency managers: Bill Kelsey, WA6FVC, Whit Brown WB0CJX, Dick Isely WD9GIG and Jim Fortney K6IYK.

The SPOC plan as proposed, however, was opposed by several individual frequency coordinators and large area coordinating organizations. While they unanimously agreed that a single frequency coordination contact organization was indeed desirable, they strongly disagreed that the ARRL should be the SPOC. Some flat out said that they would never be a part of it.

In an attempt to obtain widespread support from all frequency coordinating bodies and following months of deliberation, the 5-member drafting committee concluded that the creation of an independent NFCC would be the best way to implement the SPOC. The group will join other special interest amateur radio corporate entities such as AMSAT (satellites), TAPR (digital communications), and the NCVEC (license examinations.) The preliminary *NFCC Articles of Incorporation and By Laws* have already been formulated.

The formation of the NFCC is the direct result of the perceived need to have an organization which speaks for the problems facing the nation's frequency coordinators. Frequency coordination is defined as a generic term applied to all modes where channelized frequency operation is the norm.

These problems include the spiraling need for additional repeater channels, increasing interference, unclear regulations concerning coordination and the lack of a single organization that effectively represents repeater issues before the FCC.

The Committee acknowledged that the American Radio Relay League was not an overwhelming choice to be the SPOC. Furthermore, there seemed to be a reluctance

on the part of the League to even accept the controversial position. A majority of Frequency Coordinators, however, saw no other source of national support other than the ARRL. In a departure from the vote at the St. Charles meeting, the ultimate conclusion by the Committee was that a independent national organization should be formed and a separate alliance entered into with the League.

The drafting committee proposed in their "white paper" report that the newly formed NFCC should enter into a *Memorandum of Understanding* with the League. The memorandum essentially details how the ARRL and the NFCC would cooperate toward attaining the desired SPOC concept.

→ A National Frequency Coordinator's Office (NFCCO) would be established that would serve as the communications channel between the repeater community and the FCC.

→ The ARRL would act as the administrator but not the manager of a national frequency coordination database. The League's function would be limited to the clerical record-keeping of all information concerning amateur frequency coordination.

→ The agreement recognizes the ARRL as the principle organization representing Amateur Radio and a very valuable asset. As such, the ARRL would serve as the contact point for any FCC rule making affecting frequency coordination.

→ "In turn, the ARRL recognizes the National Frequency Coordinating Council as the responsible organization representing the interests of the frequency coordination community and that the NFCC provides direction to the ARRL for the operation of the NFCCO."

→ The ARRL would be prohibited from establishing or modifying any frequency coordination policies, standards or procedures. In other words, while the League would handle any FCC rulemaking responses or petitions concerning amateur frequency coordination, the guidance for the preparation of these documents would come from the National Frequency Coordinating Committee (NFCC.)

→ The ARRL would also be responsible for providing sufficient office space, equipment, support tools and financial assistance until the NFCC is self-supporting.

The Drafting Committee is now asking for comments on their proposals from the nation's Amateur frequency coordinators and is requesting their support. At this point, the Committee's suggestions do seem to have their approval. The NFCC also plans to petition the FCC to recognize their group and to grant it the authority to act in matters of frequency coordination.

There has been no indication that the proposals of the Drafting Committee are acceptable to the American Radio League. We will keep you posted.